

**RECOMMENDATION TO
PARENTS:
OBTAIN BIRTH CERTIFICATE
WITHIN A YEAR OF BIRTH**

Massachusetts birthing hospitals create and file over 81,000 birth records annually with municipal clerks and with the Registry of Vital Records and Statistics. Normally this legal registration process runs smoothly. Any unusual situations are resolved between the municipal clerks and the Registry. With such a large volume of birth records being registered in the Commonwealth, parents should be advised to obtain a copy of their newborn's birth record within a year of the birth. In this way, parents can not only check the record for accuracy and completeness but also ensure that the record has been legally recorded.

Chapter 46 of Massachusetts General Law establishes very specific time periods for reporting birth information. The hospital is responsible for reporting the birth to the City/Town clerk within 10 days of birth. The birth certificate is not registered as a legal record until the City/Town Clerk records it. If a birth certificate is not recorded within 365 days of the date of the birth, the Clerk must prepare a Delayed Record. This type of certificate will always need additional evidence to authenticate the record.

Advising parents to obtain a certified copy of a *Massachusetts Standard Certificate of Live Birth* within a year of birth is a simple but effective verification of the birth certificate process and may avoid some unnecessary Delayed Records of Birth. Parents may obtain certified copies at the city or town of birth or at the Registry's main office in Dorchester.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Registry of Vital Records and Statistics
150 Mt.Vernon St., 1st FL
Dorchester, MA 02125-3105

Hospital Support (617) 740-2605
Natality Unit FAX (617) 740-2713

To Order

Registry Forms:

Telephone:

(617)740-2637

FAX: (617)740-2712

Email

pedro.fidalgo@state.ma.us

Data downloads

Haile

617)740-2644

hailekiros.gebreegziabher@state.ma.us

Gebreegziabher

Staff Support

Telephone

Email

Pauline McNulty

(617)740-2623

pauline.mcnulty@state.ma.us

Paul Budrow

(617)740-2681

paul.budrow@state.ma.us

Karin Barrett

(617)740-2621

karin.barrett@state.ma.us

Jane Purtill

(617)740-2625

jane.purtill@state.ma.us

Genesis Systems

(717)909-8500

(24 hr/7 day a week pager)

Legal Registration Support

June Deloney

(617)740-2665

june.deloney@state.ma.us

Vital Regulation

Email legal support

vital.regulation@state.ma.us

Social Security Inquiries/Fetal Death Issues/Stillbirth Certificate

Annie B. Hobbs

(617)740-2624

annie.hobbs@state.ma.us



Information
Booth

**LOOK FOR
EBC SOFTWARE RELEASE
VERSION 3.3.22**

Be on the lookout for update disks from Genesis Systems for your EBC software during April 2003. Please check the upper right hand corner of your EBC Registration Screen for the current version number. You should be running EBC version 3.3.19. If it is not version 3.3.19, call the Registry to discuss version control. Specific update and backup instructions will accompany the disks. It might be helpful to request a member of your Information Technology staff to review your EBC directory, and to assist in the directory back-up and the update process.



This software revision will update the Hospital Transfer list that is used in screen 6 of EBC to indicate the correct transfer facility for the mother or newborn. The facility names have been updated; e.g. "New England Medical Center" is now "Tufts – New England Medical Center". Alternatively, you may use the facility number. That updated list was distributed with the last EBC Newsletter.

Another change in this version is on the Medical Risk Factors screen. The AIDS/HIV item # 1 has been changed to "Reserved for DPH use". AIDS/HIV data is no longer collected as part of the birth certificate medical data.

Birth Certificate Security:

Be sure your supply of unused certificates is available only to authorized staff.

CLARIFICATION: PARENT SS NUMBERS AND THE PATERNITY PROGRAM

As described in the January 2003 EBC Newsletter, parents are required to provide their own social security numbers on the *Parent Worksheet for Birth Certificates*. This requirement is mandated by the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, and the application for a child's social security card must contain parent's social security numbers.

In some limited circumstances, parents may not have a social security number, for instance, if parents were born in a foreign country. To provide for this circumstance, EBC software accepts "N" in the social security field. This translates to "number never issued" in that field. The newborn social security request can proceed normally even if the parent does not have a social security card.

Providing parent social security numbers is also a legal requirement of the Paternity Acknowledgment program. Parent social security numbers are collected on Screen 1 and Screen 3 of EBC, and are printed on either the *Voluntary Acknowledgment of Parentage* and/or the *Affidavit of NonPaternity*.

The same "number never issued" rule applies in this situation. The *Acknowledgment of Parentage* or the *Affidavit of NonPaternity* may contain the "number never issued" note in the parent social security field. Parents in this situation may participate in the Voluntary Acknowledgment program.

However, parents who do have a social security number, but refuse to provide it, may not complete the Voluntary Acknowledgment form. The word "REFUSED" (F6 in EBC) may not appear on either the *Voluntary Acknowledgment of Parentage* or the *Affidavit of NonPaternity*.

Please call the Registry if any unusual circumstances require discussion.



PARENT WORKSHEETS: HOSPITAL WORKSHEETS RETENTION AND COMPLETING

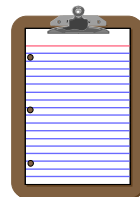
The Registry of Vital Records and Statistics provides the following worksheets for collecting all birth certificate information. Use of these worksheets is strongly recommended. (1) the *Parent Worksheet for Birth Certificates* (2) the *Pre-registration Worksheet for Birth Certificates* (3) the *Hospital Worksheet for Birth Certificates*, (4) the *Prenatal Worksheet for Birth Certificates*.

Data Collection

The data collected is substantial – over 450 items of legal, confidential and medical information are collected on the two worksheets. EBC consists of 6 screens plus additional medical information "pop-up" screens. Data collection on Parent and Hospital Worksheets are designed to correspond with the EBC screens and to capture all required birth information. Some hospitals do create their own worksheets. However, problems with incomplete data can happen if in-house worksheets do not ask for all required data. Additionally, updates to the Registry worksheets require changes to a local worksheet. Maintaining in-house worksheets may result in a lot of effort for few benefits.

Worksheet Retention

It is recommended that the *Parent Worksheet for Birth Certificates* be retained by the facility for at least one year in case problems develop with the birth certificate. Usually, in the case of any question about accurate birth certificate information, the worksheet is the best document to indicate that parent choice was used to create the birth certificate.



Birth Registry Organization

The reporting structure for birth registration unit varies in each hospital. In some facilities the birth unit reports to medical records, in others it could be the maternity unit, or the admitting department. The reporting department is ultimately responsible for making sure that both the parent and hospital worksheet information are completed.

Medical Data

Parents should never be given the Hospital Worksheet for Birth Certificates to complete. Also, parents should not be asked for medical information. Information that appears on the Hospital Worksheet must come from a medical source -- the hospital medical records or labor and delivery logs. Items that are on the Hospital Worksheet may not be "refused" (F6 in EBC), and an "unknown" response (F7 in EBC) for any of these items will be thoroughly queried until the Registry is satisfied that the information cannot be obtained by the hospital.

Parent Data

The information on the Parent Worksheet for Birth Certificates is of critical importance to the creation of the legal birth certificate and providing a solid basis for public health programs. Part of the Parent Worksheet data is used to create a permanent legal record -- the birth certificate. The confidential items on the Parent Worksheet are used statistically as a tool for health professionals in establishing programs to improve maternal and child health.

Good data quality is essential in assessing where health problems exist. This depends on fully completed birth worksheets.